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ABSTRACT

The invention relates to peptides having an amino acid sequence substantially homologous to an amino sequence of a domain of a pyrogenic exotoxin, which domain forms a central turn in the exotoxin starting within β -strand 7 and connecting the β -strand 7, via short β -strand 8, to α -helix 4, and ending within α -helix 4, based on the domain numbering of *Staphylococcus aureus* enterotoxin B. The peptides of the invention are capable of antagonizing toxin-mediated activation of T-lymphocytes, do not have agonist activity, and are capable of eliciting protective immunity against toxic shock induced by a pyrogenic exotoxin or by a mixture of pyrogenic exotoxins. The invention also relates to broad spectrum pharmaceutical compositions for the treatment, protection against or short term prophylaxis of toxin-mediated activation of T cells, comprising as active ingredient at least one peptide according to the invention or a derivative thereof, and to broad spectrum vaccines for conferring long term immunity against toxic shock induced by at least one pyrogenic exotoxin.